CLAIMS:

1. A method of coding a plurality of multimedia data comprising the following steps :

- an acquisition step, for converting said original multimedia data into one or several bitstreams ;
- a structuring step, for capturing the different levels of information in said bitstream(s) by means of analysis and segmentation ;
- a description step, for generating description data of the obtained levels of information ;
- a coding step, allowing to encode the description data thus obtained ;

wherein said description step comprises :

- a defining sub-step provided for storing a set of descriptors related to said plurality of multimedia data ; and
- a description sub-step, provided for selecting the description data to be coded in accordance with every level of information as obtained in the structuring step ;

and said set of descriptors includes at least a shape descriptor and a shape deformation descriptor.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the shape descriptor is defined by means of the following characteristics :

- Centroid (C_x, C_y) : coordinates of the centroid of the contour.
- Angle θ : angle between horizontal and main axis of the contour.
- Size of the original contour N : size of the contour after resampling.
- Set of ordered Fourier coefficients Z'_k : set of invariant Fourier coefficients.
- Size of the Fourier coefficients set P : size of the preceding set, with $1 < P \leq N$, P being necessarily odd.
- Scale : scale parameter.

and the shape deformation descriptor is defined by means of the following characteristics :

- Normalized deviation of the scale : normalized deviation of the scale parameter over the video sequence.
- Maximal size of the original contours N_{max} : the maximal size of the original contour sizes N over the video sequence. N is an item of the shape descriptor.
- Normalized deviations of each Fourier coefficient $\sigma_{z'k}$: normalized deviations of each Fourier coefficient over the video sequence.
- Size of the set of normalized deviations of each Fourier coefficient M : size of the preceding set.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the following C structure is associated to said shape descriptor :

```
typedef struct Shape Descriptor {
        /* Centroid */
        long center x;
        long center y;

        /* Angle */
        float theta;

        /* Size of the original contour, after resampling (N) */
        long size of contour;

        /* Set of Fourier coefficients */
        float *Fourier Coefficients;

        /* Size of the set of Fourier coefficients (P) */
        long size Fourier Descriptors Set ;
} ;
```

and the following C structure is associated to said shape deformation descriptor :

```
        /* Normalized deviation of scale */
        float Deviation of Scale;

        /* Maximal size of the original contours in the video sequence (N max)
        */long Maximal Size of Original contours;
```

/* Normalized deviation on Fourier coefficients */
float *Deviation of Fourier coefficients;

/* Size of the set of normalized deviations of Fourier coefficients */
lng Size of Fourier Cefficients Set;
} ;

4. For use in a coding device provided for encoding a plurality of multimedia data, computer-executable process steps provided to be stored on a computer-readable storage medium and comprising the following steps :

- an acquisition step, for converting said original multimedia data into one or several bitstreams ;
- a structuring step, for capturing the different levels of information in said bitstream(s) by means of analysis and segmentation ;
- a description step, for generating description data of the obtained levels of information ;
- a coding step, allowing to encode the description data thus obtained ;

wherein said description step comprises :

- a defining sub-step provided for storing a set of descriptors related to said plurality of multimedia data ; and
- a description sub-step, provided for selecting the description data to be coded in accordance with every level of information as obtained in the structuring step ;

and said set of descriptors includes at least a shape descriptor and a shape deformation descriptor.

5. A computer program product for a multimedia data coding device, comprising a set of instructions which when loaded into said coding device lead it to carry out the process steps as claimed in claim 4.

6. A transmittable coded signal produced by encoding multimedia data according to a coding method as claimed in claim 1.

7. A method of decoding and processing a signal as claimed in claim 6, wherein said method comprises the following steps:

- a decoding step ;
- a storing step, for storing the decoded signals ;
- a search step, actuated by an user ;
- a retrieval step, on the basis of the actuated search and the stored, decoded signals.